

Vermont's congressional delegation tonight sent a letter to President Barack Obama supporting Gov. Peter Shumlin's request for federal disaster assistance in the wake of severe flooding across Vermont.

The delegation letter sought help "in the wake of unprecedented rainfall, spring runoff and turbulent storms that included high winds and hail."

Vermont "is completely saturated to an unprecedented magnitude," according to the letter from Sens. Patrick Leahy (D-Vt.) and Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.) and Rep. Peter Welch (D-Vt.).

"The timely delivery of much-needed resources from the Federal Emergency Management Agency is absolutely critical to help Vermonters, working together, to respond to this disaster," the delegation wrote to the president.

President Obama has the authority to issue a disaster declaration, which would direct federal funds to Vermont through the Federal Emergency Management Agency. Once a declaration is made, FEMA would designate areas of the state that would be eligible for assistance and announce the types of assistance available.

The Vermont Emergency Management Agency estimates that damage to public infrastructure has exceeded \$6 million. The principal counties experiencing the most severe damage include, but not limited to, Addison, Chittenden, Essex, Franklin, Grand Isle, Lamoille and Orleans.

The full text of the delegation's letter is copied below.

May 27, 2011

The Honorable Barack Obama

The White House

1600 Pennsylvania Avenue N.W.

Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Obama,

We are writing to call your attention to the request by Vermont Governor Peter Shumlin, on behalf of the State of Vermont, for disaster assistance in the wake of unprecedented rainfall, spring runoff and turbulent storms that included high winds and hail. The State of Vermont is completely saturated to an unprecedented magnitude.

Lake Champlain and other smaller bodies of water within the state have reached record levels, and are well above flood stage. Rivers and streams have flooded their banks and remain dangerously high. State agencies have distributed tens of thousands of sandbags to local communities. The adverse impact of this unprecedented condition has taken its toll on many local communities as they deal with road washouts, downed trees, crumbling lanes and shoulders of major state highways; additionally, Vermont residents must deal with flooded homes and unplatable farmland.

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The Governor recently submitted a formal request for Preliminary Damage Assessment teams to verify damage to public infrastructure. We know that the State and several counties have reached monetary thresholds that would qualify for Federal disaster assistance. The timely delivery of much needed resources from the Federal Emergency Management Agency is absolutely critical to help Vermonters, working together, to respond to this disaster.

Mr. President, we urgently request your support of a Presidential Disaster Declaration for the state of Vermont.

Sincerely,

PATRICK J. LEAHY

BERNARD SANDERS

PETER F. WELCH